

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An optical system including a steered beam, comprising:
5 a source of a light beam;
a device which receives the light beam and steers it to form the steered beam;
a target of the steered beam; and
a semi-transparent sensor having an output signal indicative of a deviation of the
steered beam from the target.
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2. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
a portion of the sensor overlying the target.
3. The system of claim 2, the source of the light beam further comprising:
15 a pilot signal source, whereby the light beam has an information carrying portion
and a pilot portion.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein the pilot portion of the signal is carried on a first
wavelength and the information-carrying portion of the signal is carried on a second
20 wavelength, and wherein the sensor further comprises:
a sensor film that is more transparent at the second wavelength than at the first
wavelength, and that is more sensitive to the first wavelength than the second
wavelength.
- 25 5. The system of claim 2, further comprising:
a second sensor overlying the first sensor, whereby both position and direction of
the beam are measured.
6. The system of claim 2, further comprising:
30 an optical switching element through which the beam passes, wherein the target
is one of plural targets within the optical switching element.

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7. A method of performing real-time control of an optical switch, comprising:
steering an optical beam onto a target within the switch;
measuring a deviation of the optical beam from a nominal center of the target,
while the optical beam is on the target; and
5 correcting the direction of the optical beam to the nominal center of the target.
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
combining an information signal with a pilot signal to form the optical beam.
- 10 9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
modulating the pilot signal to distinguish it from the information signal.
10. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
emitting the pilot signal at a different frequency than the information signal to
15 distinguish it from the information signal.
11. The method of claim 8, including a first optical beam and a second optical beam,
further comprising:
distinguishing the first optical beam from the second optical beam by modulating
20 a first pilot signal differently than a second pilot beam modulated on the second optical
beam.
12. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
detecting when the optical beam leaves the target center.
- 25 13. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
measuring a position of the optical beam as a continuous signal.